

May 19, 2008

Kenneth Blodgett  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street SW  
Washington, DC 20423

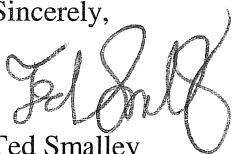
Dear Mr. Blodgett:

The Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) respectfully submits the following comments regarding the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) Environmental Assessment (EA) of STB Docket NO. AB-398 (Sub-No. 7X):

- The proposed abandonment would leave a 5 mile spur to Ultra completely isolated. This spur was not addressed in the San Joaquin Valley Railroad's (SJVR) abandonment filing or SJVR's environmental report. While this spur is not owned by SJVR, the impacts of isolating this spur, by abandoning the mainline that its connected to, should be addressed. Since this spur wasn't addressed by SJVR, there is no way for the STB to adequately address the impacts of isolating this spur in their EA.
- Rail traffic before SJVR's first imposition of a surcharge (June, 2000) was not included in their abandonment filing and is not addressed in SJVR's environmental report. Without knowing what the rail traffic was before the imposition of the original surcharge (which we believe was instituted to drive away business for the purpose of eventual abandonment), the STB can not adequately determine if the increase in truck traffic would not exceed the average daily threshold (ADT) limits pursuant to 49 CFR 1105.7(e)(5)(C).
- The abandonment's impacts on the future air quality of the area should be given special consideration considering our Valley's standing as the most polluted area in the US next to the Los Angeles Basin. In addition, with the growing realization of the effects of greenhouse gases on the environment, now is not the time to abandon existing railroad infrastructure.
- With respect to Condition #2 of the EA, "shall consult with the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC)" should be replaced with "shall abide by the California Public Utilities Commission's (PUC) determinations".

If you have any questions, please contact Benjamin Giuliani at 559-733-6291. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ted Smalley  
TCAG Executive Director